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IN THIS ISSUE

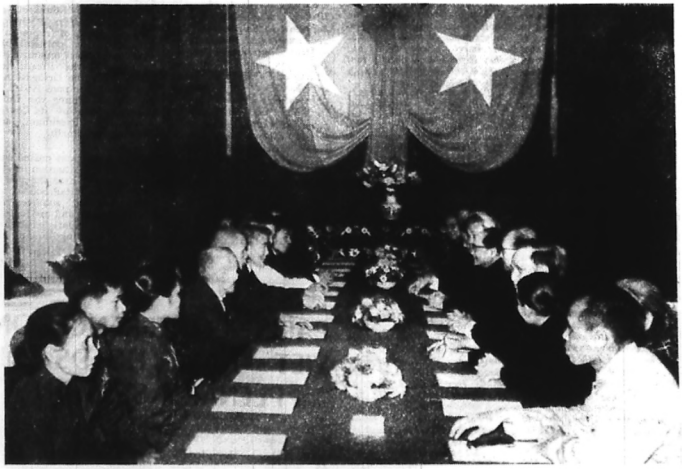
QUANG BINH FOUR YEARS AFTER

by Nguyen Khac Vien

(pages 3, 4, 5)

FATHERLAND FRONT AND NFL DELEGATIONS HOLD TALKS

page 2



INITIAL BALANCE-SHEET OF PLAF ATTACKS

(FEBRUARY 23 — MARCH 4, 1969)

The PLAF attacked 35 HQs, 38 airfields, 17 logistic bases and many hundred other enemy positions in 36 towns and cities and over 100 urban centres and townlets

- **45,000 enemy casualties (including 25,000 GIs and satellite troops)**
- *8 enemy division or brigade HQs, 13 battalions and 60 companies wiped out or badly mauled.*
- **470 planes and helicopters downed or destroyed, 1,170 military vehicles and 250 heavy guns and mortars destroyed, 115 war vessels sunk or damaged, over one hundred ammunition depots and fuel dumps set afire.**

(Communique of the PLAF Command on March 10 - 3 - 1969)

page 8

On the Day of National Resistance against the American Imperialists (March 19)

We Don't Have a Short Memory

by PHAM HUY THONG

THE four-party conference in Paris is marking time. People are getting impatient. How to find a way out of the impasse?

"Let's be realistic," says the American side. "Let's not go back to the past."

Such is not our opinion. We don't have a short memory. We think of the lessons of the past as beneficial. We are in March: our friends are invited to join our meditation on the day of March 19 1950, the meaning of which is dear to our hearts. The past often helps bring about a clear view of the present: this is precisely a case in point.

Perhaps, under other circumstances, the American appeal that "one should agree on the future and not argue about the past" might be found reasonable. But the different elements of the Viet Nam problem present themselves in such a clear light that among the partisans of peace in Viet Nam very few indeed would be lured by that sophistry.

(continued page 2)

We Don't Have A Short Memory

(Continued from page 1)

For even a little thinking would show such a proposition to be absurd. The atrocious war which has been raging in South Viet Nam would be, if one were to adopt Mr Cabot Lodge's view, a gratuitous one; people fight, and when they have enough of the fighting they resolve their differences through mutual concessions, bargaining. The immoral character of such a conception of war and peace is revolting. It is even frightening, for to "look forward" in such a way is tantamount to recognizing for aggression, if not a right, at least a kind of latitude.

But the point is neither for us to maintain, in the abstract, a certain conception of distributive justice in international law, nor even to safeguard international morals, although the defence of such a cause surely deserves to be taken up. The point is simply for us without delay to put an end to the massacres and destructions being perpetrated on our national territory, and we know that we are not the only ones in the world today to desire peace on our soil.

We hold that no correct and effective solution could be found to a war if one were to disregard its origin and character.

Such is, in our view, the case with the war in Viet Nam—a clearer case than any other. The origin of the war being American aggression, of which we are the victims, its solution calls for the cessation of that aggression. The hostilities could only be ended through the total and unconditional withdrawal of the American and satellite troops introduced into South Viet Nam for war against our people. So long as they do not recognize this truth, the American diplomats, in spite of their ranting about peace and good will, could do no more than quibble and prevaricate.

They may for instance pretend that the United States have never nurtured any aggressive designs on Viet Nam, in which case it will be fitting to recall what happened in Saigon 19 year ago, on March 19, 1950. American intervention in Vietnamese affairs goes a long way back, at least to that date.

In 1950, French colonialism had got out breath but was still trying to cling to Viet Nam. Not only were its garrisons continually harassed but the cities began to stir. Especially, as the war dragged on, it was running short of money. American imperialism, which had been waiting for a favourable occasion, then intervened, both financially and militarily. Two American warships berthed at Saigon port on March 19, 1950.

VietNam perhaps appeared as a rather easy prey, and in those days the Marines were reputed invincible! Such a show of force was expected to achieve more than mere intimidation. Yet, to everyone's surprise, the Saigon people hit back even more forcefully. A manmoth demonstration immediately submerged the city. It was the Americans who took fright; they slipped away quietly that very night.

The memory of that already far-off day of struggle has remained in our minds. It has good reasons to do so! Although Yankee imperialism had taken stock of our reactions right from the start, it had such blind faith in its "big stick" that it has ever since, with unequalled obduracy, striven to reduce us to servitude. It may argue that the half a million GIs now ravaging the Vietnamese land have been trampling our soil for only a few years: for our part, we remember that it had shown aggressive intentions against our country long before that. The introduction of troops was but the final stage of a long process of intervention, and bloodshed had already reflected upon the Americans in those days when, instead of massacring with their own hands they had had others do the killing.

What contributes to perpetuating and keeping vivid the memory of March 19, 1950, is the fact that it was on the appeal made by a young Saigon barrister that the people rose up to manifest their patriotism and fighting will: that barrister, Nguyen Huu Tho, is at present head of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation. Our unfailing determination to resist is our proud reply to the American continual designs of conquest.

At any rate, we shall never forget March 19, 1950, and this helps every Vietnamese, in face of American manoeuvres, detect all machinations and frustrate every deceit. Although consciousness of the necessity to resist aggression is certainly a prime feature of oir people at present, one cannot of course say that it is the result of either that day of struggle or its memory. But that day has assumed and will keep for ever the value of a symbol in our minds.

We saw clear that day. We are and shall remain vigilant. That day, we understood that fighting alone would free us from imperialist claws. We are convinced that, for the progress of the Paris talks, there could be no better stimulus than repeated blows on the American expeditionary corps in South Viet Nam. And so we act accordingly. In this way peace shall return. In this way, the people's independence and freedom shall be preserved, together with our own independence and freedom.

Hence the fervour with which we recall every year the memory of March 19, 1950. In our opinion, it may be useful if the friends of Viet Nam, and all who condemn the war imposed on us, our American friends in particular, also learn what happened in Saigon that day and understand the meaning of that anniversary for us. This may spare them some illusions. So much the better if the face of American imperialism appears in all its hideousness to many of them. Perhaps some will totally espouse our cause. In any case, I am sure that everyone will understand all the more clearly the firm resolve which urges us to fight on until aggression stops.

PHAM HUY THONG

FATHERLAND FRONT AND NFL DELEGATIONS HOLD TALKS

IT was with a deep emotion which bespoke the unbreakable bounds between the North and the South that in the past days a delegation of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front headed by Hoang Quoc Viet, member of its Presidiun and President of the Viet Nam Federation of Trade Unions, and composed of representatives of various political parties and mass organizations members of the Front, held talks with the Delegation of the South Vietnam NFL led by Doctor Phung van Cung, Vice-President of its Central Committee Presidium, now visiting the North.

The delegations posted each other on the situation in the two zones where the people ever closely united had accomplish splendid achievements in the fighting and production. Exchanging experiences drawn in the building up of the national-united front, the delegations were glad to notice that the line of broad national union involving the entire people advocated by President Ho Chi Minh and the policy of rallying all segments of the South Viet Nam people in the struggle against US aggression applied by the NFL had fired our people as a whole in the two zones to rise up as one man, resolved to fight and to defeat the American aggressors. At one in the appraisal of the situation, the delegations held that the sacred and urgent task now facing our entire people was to strengthen their unity, broaden their national united front, carry on and push ahead the war of resistance against US aggression, for national salvation until final victory, to liberate the South, defend the North, and achieve ultimate national reunification.

PARIS CONFERENCE ON VIET NAM HOLDS 8th PLENARY SESSION

AT the 8th plenary session of the Paris Conference on Viet Nam (March 13, 1969) the representative of the Saigon Administration repeated US false charges of alleged PLAF shelling of civilians, as well US threats. He also slanderously accused the Vietnamese people of violation of Laotian and Cambodian territories, in an attempt to camouflage the innumerable US-puppet encroachments upon Cambodian territory and the US "special war" against Laos, especially the US troops' violation of Laotian territory which was just admitted by US Defence Secretary Laird himself.

US representative Cabot Lodge reiterated his shopworn proposals which had been rejected by the DRVN and NFL Delegations. He persisted in ignoring the DRVN four points and NFL five points and in heaping slanders on the Vietnamese people in connection with the recent attacks by the PLAF.

Mr. Tran Buu Kiem, head of the NFL Delegation, refuting the allegations of the US and puppet representatives, made it plain that no threat would shake the iron-like determination of the 14 million South Vietnamese to sweep ahead in their victorious resistance to US aggression. He stressed that it was priority to defend the life and property of the civilians that the PLAF had been resolutely wiping out US aggressive troops and their valets in their very last refuges, and they were strongly supported by the people in their actions.

Dealing with the South Vietnamese people's right to self-defence, the NFL envoy challenged the US representative to give an answer to this question: "What would the American people do if the United States was attacked and if crimes similar to those of the US, satellite and puppets troops in South Vietnam were committed on US territory?"

(Continued page 7)

ANECDOTE AROUND PARIS CONFERENCE

A Mountain that Gives Birth to A Mouse

WHAT makes the difference between the 7 th session of the Paris Conference and the preceding session is that at the 7th session Pham Dang Lam, the Saigon representative, who spoke after Cabot Lodge, delivered an unusually short statement lasting only 20 minutes. After giving vent to his anger on the so-called "Communist rocketing of Saigon civilians", Lam moved very dramatically that "the present session be adjourned" as a sign of protest.

This of course sounded ludicrous to any observer following closely the work of the Conference. According to accepted procedural rules, at the 7th session the floor order would have been given to Mr. Tran Buu Kiem first, then Mr. Xuan Thuy, then the heads of the U.S and the Saigon delegations. It is noteworthy that this "master-and-servant" couple was free to settle the speaking order between themselves and Cabot Lodge usually let Lam speak before him. But at the 7th session, Cabot Lodge made it a point to reverse the order. The reason was quite simple: if Lam spoke before Lodge and proposed the suspension of the session, Lodge would find himself in a hobble.

(Continued page 7)

THE NORTH—GREAT REAR BASE OF THE SOUTH

QUANG BINH, Four Years After

IF you want to have an idea of American technology, make a trip in Quang Binh province. You'll see a veritable exhibition of U.S air forces. On display are debris and carcasses of all types of aircraft: F.105,F.4, B.57, F.100,RF.66,AD.6,A.4D, etc.—a maze of figures and initials. Each carcass reveals an entanglement of wire, a profusion of details, an intricacy of complex parts; each plane is a true factory, almost fully automated. You'll also see all types of bombs,rockets, missiles, all designed to strike and kill as effectively as possible. In a bamboo thicket, you may see a kind of huge, long-legged insect, or rather a kind of olive-green plant that uninformed people would hardly notice: this is a "tropical shrub", which detects noises made by passing trucks or crowds of people and calls in planes to attack them. Quite clever, isn't it? The same ingenuity is shown in the wide variety of bombs and mines: steel-pellet bombs, shrapnell bombs, magnetic mines, delayed-action bombs, phosphorus bombs, etc.—a full panoply worthy of the most imaginative sci-fic writer!

WHAT USE ULTRAMODERN PLANES?

IF you want to have an idea of Yankee barbarity, make a trip in Quang Binh province. As far as the eye can reach, you'll see villages and townlets burnt down, razed. Why should the pretty little town of Dong Hoi have been destroyed? There was no factory, not even a railway-station, only a few administrative buildings a few schools, a market-place on the bank of a calm river, next to the ramparts of an old citadel. But even the coconut-lined promenade along the limpid waters of the Nhat Le river was bombed. The Tam Toa church and the big provincial hospital are but heaps of rubble. Why blow up with bombs and burnt down with phosphorus such peaceful fishing villages as Nhan Trach, Ly Hoa, such peasant hamlets as Vo Ninh, Quang Phuc, Thai Thuy, and so many others? 187 villages have been completely destroyed, all the rest damaged. Not a single hamlet has been spared. All—I mean all, without exception—hospitals, schools, churches, pagodas, temples in Quang Binh province have been destroyed. All hydraulic works have been attacked, each several times. And not at random. It was at the beginning of the dry season, when the rice was thirsty for water, that U.S. aircraft attacked water conservancy works, big an small. It was also in full dry season, when a scorching wind called «Lao wind» was blowing in searing gusts, that American planes showered phosphorus bombs on the villages. The bombing of villages followed a refined technique: a first salvo of explosive bombs drove people into their shelters before incendiary bombs chased them out, and then steel-pellet bombs were sprinkled on those who tried to save their flaming houses! Nearly two and a half million bombs—not counting rockets and artillery shells—were rained on the 400,000 people of Quang Binh, where the only military target was the road crossing the province. Why such fury against all those villages which were no threat for the security of the US Expeditionary Corps, let alone that of the United States of America?

Why? Insanity is no explanation. The men in the Pentagon and the White House are perfectly clear-headed people, who knew quite well what they were after while seeking to raze the villages of Quang Binh.

In order to destroy the few bridges on the 100-km stretch of road crossing Quang Binh, there was no need to dump two and a half million tons of bombs on all the villages of the province. In fact, the aerial escalation was first and foremost **a war against the people.** The aim was to terrorize a people, to "give lesson", to strike a wholea region mortally so as to bring the Vietnamese people to their knees.

IF you want to have an idea of the scope of the failure suffered by the Americans, an idea of the **people's war**, make a trip in Quang Binh. National Highway No 1, the only great artery running through the province, looks like a string laid on a sieve. It is lined on either side by dozens of thousands of bomb craters filled with green water, and already teeming with fish and frogs. Crossing just a few of those bridges will give you a clear idea of the dilemma facing US air forces. For lack of more important targets, US supersonic aircraft had to attack bridges, or rather bridgelets, of 5 to 30 metres in length. Around each bridge, in a radius of 200-300 metres, one sees hundreds of bomb craters, and often plane wreckage a few kilometres farther. Either the planes flew at high altitude and great speed and bombed at random, or they had to dive on their targets: a small bridge, a truck convoy, sometimes even an isolated vehicle, in which case they would run into intense groundfire by one or several batteries, groups of machineguns or rifles. Whenever a bridge was hit by a bomb or rocket, it was replaced, a few hours or a few days later at most, by another, made of wood or bamboo, and the battle would have to be fought all over again. The Pentagon strategists had licked into shape the strategic air forces, the magic weapon which should have allowed them to carry the day: they had not imagined that their ultra-modern aircraft would one day be thrown into that futile game. Of course, when vehicles crossed a damaged bridge, they bumped and jerked; when they used a pontoon bridge of wood or bamboo, they had to go slowly. But all the same, they passed!

In the case of some bridges where the planes had fallen into veritable ambushes, we have figured out the cost for the attackers: about one million dollars for every metre of bridge destroyed. And for what results? Never was traffic so heavy on the roads of Quang Binh, as U.S. officials were the first to admit.

PLANE HUNTERS

THE following figure might interest the reader: 572 aircraft shot down over

(Continued page 4)

Nhan Trach, a peaceful fishing village: U.S. aircraft have passed here!

North Viet Nam

On March 10, 13 and 15 three pilotless spy planes were grounded in the Red River delta, bringing the total number of planes lost by the U.S. in the North between August 5, 1964 and March 15, 1969 to

3270

QUANG BINH, FOUR YEARS AFTER

Young girl of Quang Binh.
Like so many others, she is ready to take up whatever weapon is at hand to fight any aggressor.

(Continued from page 3)

Quang Binh in four years. This seems fantastic to anyone who has not been there. In the course of our journey in Quang Binh, we have discovered in all its inhabitants a veritable passion: each person, each group, wants to get a plane. We've talked to militiamen, young men and women, white-haired folk, elderly matrons: all get excited when they recounted with shining eyes how they had succeeded in obtaining an automatic rifle or a 12.7 mm. machine-gun, and how they had lain in wait day and night for months before bringing a marauding plane down.

To lie in wait! A fitting phrase, for the entire population of Quang Binh has engaged during four years in a gigantic plane-hunt, which still goes on. Day and night, in the most diverse places, tens of thousands of pairs of eyes, rifles, machine-guns, ack-ack batteries, are pointed skyward. All possible stratagems are used to attract planes and bring them within range. While non-combatants take careful shelter, those with a weapon in hand are spoiling for a fight! Usually, people avoid facing a plane. Not so in Quang Binh. Young girls, who would blush when interviewed, only wish for one thing: that planes would dive on their positions so that they could fire on them point blank!

We came to understand the mainspring of that passion when we talked to Pham Thi Hai at Nhan Trach. Nhan Trach is a small fishing village amidst sand dunes, one of many similar villages strung along the sandy coast of Quang Binh. In ten years, its inhabitants had planted hundreds of thousands of tamarisk pines to protect it against the sand. To grow trees in the burning sand and to water it for days is no cushy job. But once protection ensured for the site, the Nhan Trach villagers set to work: in ten years, 300 brick houses were built, on the sand too, plus an administrative office, a school, an infirmary-maternity, and a small museum. In the old days, the Nhan Trach fishermen had worked for the owners of fishing junks and bought their rice from rapacious merchants. The junks had become property of the co-operative, and rice was sold by the State: and so every one of them was able to build for himself a brick house. All the children went to school. The first U.S. air raid, which took place on February 7, 1965, caused no casualties. But in March 1966, twelve successive attacks completely destroyed the village and about a hundred fishing boats. Not a single house remained standing.

Until American aggression began, Pham Thi Hai had grown up in that atmosphere of stirring change at Nhan Trach. A year later, when she was 16, she enlisted in the people's militia. In 1966, her house, the pride of her family, was razed, and one of her brothers killed by American bombs. Since then, her mind is taken up by one single idea: to avenge her family and her brother, to defend her village. She feels attacked in her own person by the aggressors. All of a sudden, things that until then had seemed remote to her—the South, socialism, the fatherland, imperialism—took on precise meanings. In 1967, together with a group of young girls, Pham Thi Hai succeeded in getting a 12.7-mm. machinegun. Her squad has so far brought down two American planes.

Others have been still more lucky: a group of girls of Ngu Thuy, another fishing village, have been entrusted with modern weapons by the military authorities. Seventh Fleet vessels had destroyed their village and were prowling off shore. And so the girls, who had gone through junior secondary school, had learnt to fire heavy pieces of ordnance. Later they engaged on repeated occasions in artillery duels with American vessels, three of four of which were hit and put to flight.

From simple rifle to heavy guns, the people's war had advanced at great strides. Patriotism, the will to defend socialism and the native land, was now served by modern weapons. As soon as an American aircraft descended to a lower altitude in an attempt to hit a target, it was caught in murderous groundfire. Thirty-five U.S. planes were lost in vain efforts to strike at the Cam ly dam, one of the major U.S. targets in the province. Escalation was no joyride, as the Pentagon strategists had expected. The American air forces were dealt heavy blows, and it was necessary for Washington to put an unconditional end to those bombings, which had proved both costly and ineffective. A look at the wreckage of the planes shows at one glance both their sophisticated technique and vulnerability. There is an entanglement of machinery, wiring, electronic circuits, parts of which are only visible with the help of a magnifying glass. A well-aimed bullet would easily put such complex mechanism out of order or set the fuel tanks ablaze! The point is to have riflemen in sufficient numbers and with sufficient courage to be present everywhere and to keep their cool while waiting for the planes to dive on them before opening fire at close range. Quang Binh has such gunners, tens of thousands of such plane hunters.

FACING U.S. BOMBS

FOR the people of Quang Binh, where the Pentagon's aim was a war of extermination, the question was not merely to bring down planes and to ensure a steady flow of traffic. First and foremost, production had to be maintained and a livelihood secured for the population: one of peasants and fishermen. Isolated peasants would have succombed but for many years already before the American attacks agricultural and fishing co-operatives has been founded. A better organisation of labour, the improvement of certain implements, fresh innovations, and the appeal to patriotism made it possible to surmount all difficulties. Wherever water conservancy works were destroyed, the people switched over to dry crops—potato, cassava... ... to fill the shortage of rice. When the enemy started spraying ricefields with steel pellet bombs, the harvesters built shelters on the spot.

The following slogan testifies to the spirit animating the Quang Binh peasants in the course of the war: "To cling to bomb craters to apply new agricultural techniques!" It was not enough to till fields that were being bombarded: one had also to improve techniques and increase outputs. It is precisely since 1965 that new agricultural techniques have made headway in the province: ricefields have been re-arranged to ensure better irrigation; new strains of rice and sweet potato with high yields have been introduced; new plants have been grown for compost. During these four years, Quang Binh has not suffered from hunger.

Neither has it suffered from any serious shortage of goods. Formerly, the province received from other regions, Hanoi especially, fabrics, earthenware and other necessities. Communications having grown difficult, regionalization of the economy has been actively carried out. New handicraft and semi-industrial enterprises have come into being. In four years, the number of workers has increased more than sixfold.

Far from destroying the socialist structures, American aggression has proved their excellence: in face of the danger, those structures have grown much stronger thanks to better organisation. On that level, Washington has sustained a setback of capital importance. Never could a so-called "under-developed country" have resisted to such brutal aggression with feudal or capitalist structures

Within the framework of those socialist structures, the population as a whole has been able to develop to the full its industriousness, resilience, initiative and heroism. Let us take for instance the case of Nguyen Thi Vien, a 24-year-old woman in charge of the buying and selling co-op of Ly Ninh village. The co-op buys everything the peasant get from their family plots (vegetables, poultry) or cottage industries, and sells them industrial or handicraft goods. Day and night, on oft-bombarded roads strewn with delayed-action or steel-pellet bombs, Nguyen Thi Vien shuttles back and forth to ensure the two-way flow of merchandise. One day she rode her bike to the hills to look for *bò-hòt* beans: one hundred kilometres for the round trip, on bomb-strewn roads — quite a prowess. Are those *bò-hòt* beans a medicine or some kind of indispensable goods? No, they are simply used as a shampoo by women, for they yield a fragrant soapy lather. When Nguyen Thi Vien was asked why she should have risked her life for mere shampoos, she answered "Well, one must live decently, even under the bombs!"

The American General Curtis Le May had declared that the bombing would take North Viet Nam back to the Stone Age. Nguyen Thi Vien gave him the reply, in deed and words: one can live decently, even under the bombs. In Quang Binh each family has built for itself an underground shelter, often with the pillars, beams and rafters taken from the house. If you pay a visit to one of those shelters, you will be surprised by the efforts to make life there, if still uncomfortable, decent. There are pictures on the walls and people tell you that the war may last many more years without being too much of an inconvenience. Their shelters could withstand the worst bombardments.

In each shelter, there is even a corner for the children, where they may study their lessons. For although all schools have been destroyed, classes are still going on. Truong, a teacher at the Trung Trach school, told me: "Formerly, tight bonds already united the school to the village people. With the war, those ties have grown even closer. Everybody puts in his share. In each hamlet, the people have built a class-room with protective revetment and air raid shelters. They look after the teachers, whom they put up in their homes. Whenever there is delay in either salary payment or rice supply due to bombardments, the teachers don't have to worry, for the local people will loan them both food and money. Formerly, when the kids came home from school, their parents often asked them to do too many odd jobs: to graze the buffalo, fetch water, or till the garden. Now that we are paying them more frequent visits, we have interested them more in their children's studies, and they give them more free time to study. That is one of the reasons why education has progressed in spite of the war."

Here are a few figures which may provide the Pentagon strategists with food for thought:

SCHOOL ENROLMENT IN QUANG BINH
(Total population : 400,000)

	Primary	Junior secondary	Senior secondary	Total
1964	46,600	12,697	1,160	60,457
1966	52,663	24,921	3,935	81,519

We are in the 20th century, a long way from the Stone Age! As true 20th century men, the peasants of Quang Binh, during all these years of war, have enjoyed cinema shows, song and dance performance, and reading. Formerly whenever a mobile projection team visited a village, the shows were attended by crowds of 2,000-3,000. During the years of war, the teams have multiplied, and so have the shows. Each is attended by about fifty spectators, who quickly take shelter at the first alert. In 1965, the province had six cinema teams, one artistic ensemble and two libraries; now the figures are: 16 cinema teams, four provincial troupes (each village has its own amateur group), and five libraries. The circulation of newpapers and books has doubled.

WHEN THE TEMPO OF HISTORY QUICKENS

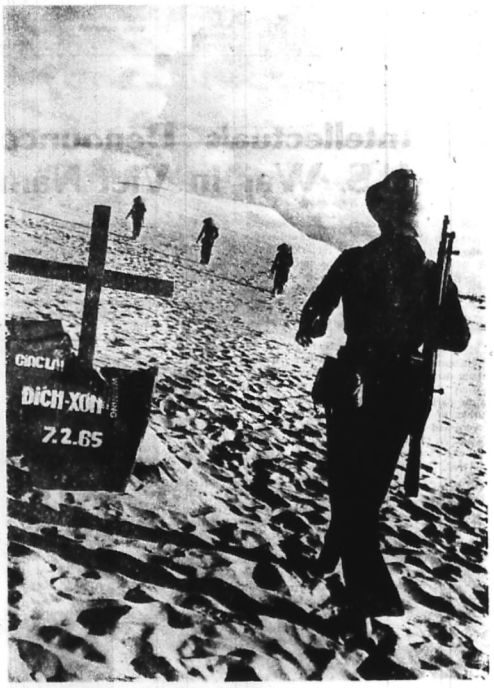
IN 1965, there were in some remote mountain regions of Quang Binh a few ethnic minorities (about 5,000 people in all) who had not yet moved very far from the Stone Age. U.S aircraft came and destroyed their hamlets scattered in the jungles, and psywar loudspeakers put forth rumours that those "demons from the skies" could see everything and hear everything. Some of these tribes went and hid in grottoes. They killed their domestic animals, lest the "demons" would hear their cries. Women tried to prevent their babies from crying, day or night. No people with non-lacquered teeth were admitted to visit them for the "demons" would spot their white teeth. Revolutionary militants then came to share the miserable life of those people and talked them into returning to their villages and crops. Gradually, the tribesmen learnt that the planes were not demons but engines operated by men. They also learnt to use machineguns, and would wait with the patience of true mountaineers, until the planes came within range to shoot them down. Together with the art of firing machineguns, they also studied new agricultural techniques and the alphabet. Within four year American aggression has taken them from the Stone Age to that of the machinegun. One cannot imagine more pitiful setback for the U.S air forces.

The first American air attacks in February 1965 caught me on the roads of Quang Binh. That February 7, 1965, the people of Quang Binh, in keeping with a custom practised already for some years, were planting trees on hills and along paths. Formerly, the poor peasants hardly planted any trees in their gardens, even less on barren hills or along roads. In their plots they grew fast-growing tubers that gave them food after a few months. Planting trees that would yield some returns only five or six years later went beyond their vision of the future. They weren't at all sure what might happen in the next few months, at the next harvest; how could they think years ahead? But with the setting up then the consolidation of their co-operatives, the peasants now feel secure enough about their future to set about planting trees, even on bare hills whose lateritized soil is little favourable to vegetation.

Here I am back in Quang Binh, in February 1969. I am quite surprised to see, on this second day of Tet, the Lunar New Year Festival, people busy planting trees along pathways and on many hills. I had thought that after four years of intense bombing, they would have other things to do than growing trees. But they are planting trees as if nothing had happened. Because they feel certain about their future.

The US air forces have succeeded neither in stifling the present life, nor in nipping the buds of the future. Could there be more complete fiasco?

Quang Binh, February 1969
NGUYEN KHAC VIEN



The grave of American air pilot Dickson, shot down over Quang Binh on Feb. 7, 1965

"SUPPORT VIET NAM" RALLY IN PARIS

THE Central Committee of the French Communist Party, the National Committee of Action for Support and Victory of the Vietnamese People, and the French Union of Communist Youth on March 3 called a large meeting in Paris to show again the solidarity of the French working class and labouring people with the Vietnamese people now fighting against U.S. aggression.

Addressing the meeting, Waldeck Rochet, Secretary General of the French C.P., highlighted the significance of the Vietnamese people's just struggle and pointed out that it was the duty of all peoples to bring maximum pressure to bear on the U.S. authorities to cease their aggression in Viet Nam, withdraw U.S. troops from South Viet Nam and let the people there decide themselves their own destiny. He called on the French people to stage large demonstrations of solidarity with the Vietnamese people and collect 100 million old francs in support of Viet Nam before March 31, 1969.

"Once again", Waldeck Rochet concluded, "I affirm that the French working class and people always stand by the side of the Vietnamese people. We will redouble our efforts to demonstrate still more forcefully our solidarity with the Vietnamese people, politically and materially as well".

The participants shouted "Viet Nam for the Vietnamese" "U.S. go home!" to greet the speeches.

The meeting unanimously approved two messages of solidarity sent respectively to President Ho Chi Minh and Lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho, President of the Presidium of the NFL.

Week of Tri-Continental Solidarity with Viet Nam (March 13-19, 1969)

BROTHERS-IN-ARMS' SOLIDARITY

TON QUANG PHIET
Chairman of the Viet Nam Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity

NINETEEN years ago, on March 19, 1950, 500,000 people in Saigon-Cholon burning with hatred for imperialism took to the streets to demonstrate vigourously against the presence of two U.S. warships anchored at Saigon port, and for their immediate departure. Thus, the first U.S. attempt at intervention in Viet Nam fizzled out.

In their present resistance to U.S. aggression, for national salvation, the South Vietnamese people have been keeping up their gallant fighting spirit with increasing success in relentless attacks on the enemy.

The general offensives and simultaneous uprisings launched since the Spring of 1968 have violently shaken the position of the aggressors and the traitors to the nation, created a stir in public opinion in the USA and in the world, driven the enemy into passivity and a dead end and portended their inevitable and total failure.

The successes of the Vietnamese people can be ascribed to their unity: 31 million people, overcoming all difficulties and enduring all sacrifices, have been fired, as one man, by the resolve to struggle for independence and freedom until complete victory. These successes are associated with the world people's ever wider and stronger support and assistance.

Siding with us on the same anti-imperialist front, the Asian, African, Latin American peoples and progressives in the world have been following closely our successful and just fight against U.S. aggression, showing their great solidarity with it and their active support to it.

Their considerable and effective help has increased the fighting force of the Vietnamese people. Not less significantly, many governments and Heads of States of socialist or nationally independent countries, many political groupings and mass organizations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, various international organizations... have more than once raised their voices to pay tribute to the great and all-round achievements of the Vietnamese people — especially since the Tet offensives in 1968 — to support the reasonable position and approve the goodwill attitude of the DRVN and NFL delegations to the Paris conference.

In many ways and forms, the tri-continental peoples and the world peoples have expressed their militant solidarity with the Vietnamese people's struggle against US aggression. They have held lectures, teach-ins, festivals, and mass demonstrations, distributed anti-US leaflets and displayed DRVN and NFL flags. They have called on GI's to oppose the war, collected money and medecines, staged performances, sold books, and given their overtime allowances to Viet Nam. They have donated blood for Viet Nam and volunteered to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Vietnamese people.

For many years now, on our Nation-Wide Day of Struggle Against US Aggression (March 19) the peoples in Asia, Africa, Latin America and in many other countries in the world have kept a "Week of Solidarity with Viet Nam" and taken other actions to show the militant solidarity and strong support among the peoples struggling against imperialism. Right at the beginning of March 1969, the Secretariat of the Tri-continental Organization called on member organizations and other progressive organizations in the world to observe a "Week of Solidarity with Viet Nam" on a large scale. According to its appeal, in the present situation, it is necessary to increase support to, and strengthen solidarity with, the Vietnam ese people to unreservedly support the just positions of the NFL and the DRVN government, and to provide the NFL and the DRVN with every indispensable material and political assistance. The appeal demanded that the US Government put an end to its aggressive war, unconditionally withdraw all US and satellite troops and arms from South Viet Nam, and remove all its military bases in Viet Nam.

The drive for support for Viet Nam has been gaining in strength and width, its activities have been ever more timely. It has been prompted by the awareness of the tri-continental peoples and the world peoples that the Vietnamese people's successes are theirs and active contributions to the common struggle for independence, national liberation, democracy, peace and social progress. In the name of 2,300 million Asians, Africans and Latin Americans, the representatives of the Tri-Continental Organization said in Cairo (Sept. 1968) at the "Extraordinary Conference of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization in Support of the Vietnamese People's Fight Against US Imperialism" that it was necessary to realize that with their fighting, the Vietnamese set the noblest and most striking example to the world's revolutionary militants; every enemy battalion wiped out, every enemy regiment or division defeated and every enemy plane shot down in Viet Nam is a genuine and vivid illustration of the strength of solidarity.

The Vietnamese people sincerely thank their brothers and their friends for their valuable and warm support. They consider it a great encouragement and an effective contribution to their struggle against US aggression.

The US imperialists have suffered repeated failures and have become more and more isolated. But, they are obstinately holding to their aggression against South Viet Nam, threatening the security of the DRVN, and have not made up their minds to withdraw the US and satellite troops from South Viet Nam to let the Vietnamese people settle their own affairs, without foreign interference. Confronted with such a state of things, the Vietnamese people have no other choice than step up their resistance against US aggression. And the World' Peoples' Support-Viet Nam Front has never been wider.

The Vietnamese people are firmly convinced that, with the unity of 31 million Vietnamese from the South to the North, their determination to dash forward in response to President Ho's appeal: "Let's fight so the Yanks quit, and the puppet topple", and the ever greater sympathy and stronger support of the peoples of the three continents and the world and of progressive Americans, their struggle against US aggression, for national salvation, will surely end in victory.

IN THE UNITED STATES

Intellectuals Denounce U.S. War in Viet Nam

SCIENTISTS and teachers from 30 universities in the United States on March 4 stayed away from their work all day to protest the U.S. war in Viet Nam and the use of scientific achievements for war purposes, foreign reports say.

At their special seminars, the dissentient American scientists declared that their obligation did not permit them to participate in the execution of orders of the Pentagon, and in the experimentation on the new means for massive extermination of human lives.

Nobel Prize winner Wald, Professor of Harvard University, strongly denounced the US war in Viet Nam and pointed out that the cost of the war in Viet Nam had deprived the American people of the indispensable means to solve multiple and most complicated social problems.

Prof. Howard Zinn of Boston University, compared the U.S. aggression in Viet Nam to the invasion of Europe by the German and Italian fascists and declared that "the U.S. must not stay one day longer in Viet Nam".

Neil Sheehan, *New York Times* military correspondent, remarked that the U.S. had assumed the role of a political gendarme to fight revolutionary changes.

For his part, Roger Hilsman, professor of Columbia University and ex-Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, deplored U.S. transforming of the "Vietnamese war into an American war" as a "tragic error".

On March 5, at a symposium on Asian questions, many well-known personnalities in New York condemned the U.S. war in Viet Nam. Richard Pfeffer, Council member of the "Adlai Stevenson" Institute of International Relations, and author of "No more Viet Nam", demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the U.S. armed forces from South-East Asia. He pointed out that the war in Viet Nam was the biggest moral and political scandal ever known in American history.

Dick Gregory, a famous Black American actor, again denounced the U.S. ruling circles' squandering 56 per cent of the money extorted, from the American people on the war against the Vietnamese people. He said the U.S. war in Viet Nam had caused losses to the American people and demanded that the U.S. government promptly end this dirty war.

Tanzanian youths and students demonstrate against the Viet Nam war in front of the American Embassy at Dar-es-Salaam.

MILITARY OPERATIONS

- ★ A Thai reinforced battalion and many other small units completely wiped out east of Saigon.
- ★ In Tay Ninh province, 5 puppet para companies put out of action, 2 positions of "First Cav." overrun.
- ★ Heavy American losses west of Kontum, north of Highway No 9 near 17th parallel and west of Hue.

IN the last week, besides the PLAF command's communiqué giving the battlecount of the first ten days of post-Tet PLAF attacks throughout South Viet Nam. *Giai Phong* Press Agency gave details of many engagements won by the patriotic forces, the most outstanding of which were:

SAIGON FRONT

Details on the results of PLAF attack on the Long Binh logistic base areas east and northeast of Saigon, near the big Bien Hoa base, have just been released. The battle lasted from the first hours of Feb.23 to Feb. 28. At Long Binh, apart from the big munition depots and chemical and fuel dumps, the airfield, the US Army HQ in South Viet Nam and the US Operational HQ N° 2 were stormed. In the defence perimetre of that sector, many positions held by Thai soldiers were violently assaulted, of which the Nuoc Trong, on the road to Vung Tau, about 30 km east of Saigon, was completely flattened on Feb. 23. US aggressors and mercenaries suffered 1,400 casualties, including an American general officer. The PLAF wiped out a Thai reinforced company and a platoon, and 2 American platoons. They also badly mauled two other Thai companies, destroyed 40 vehicles, 2 chemical dumps, a fuel depot and an ammunition depot.

Northwest of Saigon, in Tay Ninh province, on the night of March 7, two positions of US First Air Cavalry Division were rushed by the patriots one at 23 km northeast of the provincial capital held by 4 companies (2 artillery companies) and the other at Tra Cao, 30 km south-southeast of Tay Ninh.

This was the third successful coup on Tra Cao since Feb. 23. Besides, on March 7, 9 and 10, in many localities west southwest and east, southeast of Tay Ninh, 5 paratroops companies in all were wiped out.

South of Saigon, at the mouths of the Mekong river, on March 4, two US riverine task forces were intercepted on Giong Trom river and 12 vessels sunk or burnt.

CENTRAL TRUNG BO

ON the Western High Plateaux, from March 2 to 7, in the mountain region west of Kontum, the PLAF killed wounded or captured over 400 G.I.s, downed or destroyed 21 choppers and warplanes, destroyed 7 tanks and armoured cars and 7 heavy mortars. On Road No 14, between Kontum and Pleiku from March 1 to 8, the patriotic forces put out of action 384 enemy troops including 169 GIs, and destroyed 43 vehicles (20 tanks and armoured cars) and 3 choppers.

On the coastal areas, the US base of Cam Ranh was bombarded for the third time since February 23, by the patriots' artillery which triggered a fire and many explosions there.

South of Da Nang, the US base at An Hoa received the fifth shelling since Feb. 23: the CP of Marine Regiment 5, the artillery park and fuel depots were hit.

NORTHERNMOST PART OF SOUTH VIET NAM

WEST of Hue, on March 8, Ta Vo post garrisoned by a US mixed artillery battalion and an infantry company was partly destroyed by the PLAF who overran the camp CP and the infantry company. Enemy rescue parties were intercepted and 250 GIs put out of action. In March 11, in Co Ca Va region, about 50 Km from Hue, a company of US Marine Division 3 was also wiped out.

Near the 17th parallel, in the area of Highway N° 9 and in the neighbourhood of Con Tien and Tan Lam US positions, the enemy lost nearly 600 men (440 GIs) in the engagements unfolding between March 6 and 13.

Paris Conference on Viet Nam...

(Continued from page 2)

Mr. Tran Buu Kiem also gave an analysis of the five points of the NFL. He pointed out that these five points not only supplied the basic orientation of a sound political solution to the South Viet Nam issue, but also dealt with essential specific questions relating to that solution. What is most important is that the US should withdraw unconditionally from South Vietnam all US and satellite troops so as to leave the South Vietnamese people free to settle themselves their own affairs in accordance with the NFL Political Programme without foreign interference. As regards the Thieu-Ky-Huong puppet regime, an instrument for the US imperialists to commit aggression and sabotage any sound settlement of the South Vietnam issue, the South Vietnamese people have set themselves to overthrow it.

Minister of State Xuan Thuy, head of the DRVN Government Delegation, strongly supported the NFL position. He once again rebutted the US assertions on a so-called tacit agreement relating to the cessation of North Viet Nam bombardments. He recalled that from March to October 1968 US representatives had set various conditions for such a cessation only to meet with a flat refusal by the DRVN. Finally on November 1, 1968 the United States had to cease unconditionally all bombardments of the DRVN. It was the US which broke its own commitments, Mr. Xuan Thuy added, with its continued spying and provocative flights over North Viet Nam and unjustifiable bombing and strafing of many populated areas of the DRVN Southern provinces.

Denouncing the Nixon Administration's threats, the DRVN chief negotiator reminded that former US President Johnson had also invoked his right of reprisals to escalate his war against North Viet Nam, but had failed pitifully; if the present US rulers try obstinately to intensify the war, they will sustain even heavier setbacks.

The DRVN finally launched an appeal on US authorities to be more realistic in their views and actions, to take into account the DRVN four points and NFL five points, to put an end to their aggression, to withdraw unconditionally from South VietNam all US and satellite troops, to enter into serious talks with the NFL and to cease once for all violations of the sovereignty and threats to the security of the DRVN.

Communique...

(Continued from page 8)

against new crimes which are likely to be perpetrated by the enemy out of obstinacy. The struggle imposed on our people who defend national independence and freedom still has many difficulties ahead, but it is sure to achieve a most glorious victory.

The communiqué ends with an appeal to the PLAF fighters and people who, in the flush of the current successes, will rush forward and deal the enemy more staggering blows to foil his political and military schemes, to shatter its already tottering will of aggression, to liquidate the puppet military and administrative apparatus and to build a peaceful, independent, democratic neutral and prosperous South Viet Nam and ultimately achieve the peaceful reunification of the country.

Anecdote...

(Continued from page 2)

So Lam put forward his proposal at the right moment without forgetting to add in a very quixotic manner that the next session would take place just as usual.

What occurred next? The Lam motion simply fell flat, since after Lam had finished his jabber, Mr. Tran Buu Kiem and Mr. Xuan Thuy took the floor to denounce U.S neo-colonialism and the Saigon clique's high treason, and the Conference session continued its work as if nothing had happened.

Some time later, at the Saigon delegation's press conference, a newsman asked the puppet spokesman what the head of his delegation would have done if he had been given the floor before all the other delegations and whether he would still have proposed the suspension of the session. "Appropriate measures would have been taken" quibbled the spokesman.

And so Pham Dang Lam's threat was just like a mountain giving birth to a... mouse.

COMMUNIQUE OF PLAF COMMAND

GIAI PHONG Press Agency has just released a 3,000-word PLAF war communique dated March 10, giving an initial report on the action of the patriotic armed forces during the 10-day period following the great PLAF three-up beginning night of February 22 last.

It was reported that during these 10 days the enemy received thundering blows all over the territory of South Viet Nam (see map). 400 enemy targets were hit by PLAF infantry and artillery, chiefly:

36 provincial capitals and towns (out of a total of 47 in South Viet Nam).

35 HQs of various arms, army corps, divisions and brigades and regimental CPs, such as HQs of U.S. Army, of U.S. Company 2, of U.S. Amphibious Force 3, of the puppet Navy and "Marines", the puppet 1st and 2nd corps.

38 airfields including Bien Hoa, Da Nang, which are among the biggest U.S. airbases in South East Asia;

17 big logistic bases including Long Binh, Nha Be, Cam Ranh, Da Nang, etc.

More than 100 district capitals or other urban centres.

Many strategic roads or waterways of paramount importance for the enemy's war efforts.

Enemy casualties ran to 15,000 including 23,000 GIs and nearly 2,000 satellite troops. The HQs of 2 American divisions and 6 brigades suffered heavy losses. Ten American infantry battalions and 2 artillery battalions and one Thai battalion were wiped out or whittled down. *American* and *Tropic Lightning* divisions were the hardest hit and Brigade 3 of the latter was practically put out of action at Dau Tieng on February 23.

Big quantities of enemy war materials and equipment were destroyed or heavily damaged as reported in the headlines.

The communiqué then stated the importance of these successes which would have a great significance on the military situation in South Viet Nam.

With regard to the PLAF, they are an irrefutable proof that they still hold theinitiative and an illustration of their capacities of striking at the enemy at the time and place of their own choice, of mounting relentless successful offensives. They are also a proof of their high combativeness, their grim determination to win, their sense of discipline, courage and self-denial as well as the intelligence and ability of their officers and men, of militiamen and even civilians who take part in the fight or support the PLAF by various means. The tactics used has proved most efficient, which explains the high degree of the results obtained. In thousands of hamlets in South Viet Nam, the inhabitants rose up to shatter the enemy coercion machine by making away with local tyrants and "pacification" team members.

Insofar as the enemy is concerned, these ten days were disastrous for him: he suffered losses in manpower, materials and war means, which caused him insurmountable difficulties and worsened his already passive situation.

He was not in the least aware of the time chosen by the PLAF for these attacks, of their direction and targets, of their size and of the diversity of their tactics. In a word, he tried vainly to wriggle out of his passiveness. Events have fully substantiated the bankruptcy of Abrams' "hold-and-clear" strategy and "mobile defence" plan. The efforts of the enemy to minimize his setback and to put a bright face on it are all the more ridiculous. The "Vietnamization of the war" in the way Washington wishes, is only an empty slogan and it is obvious that the only "honourable solution" to the war problem for the US is to give up its policy of aggression it has been pursuing in Viet Nam.

In the third place, according to the communique, the successes of the PLAF and people in South Viet Nam testify to the perfect soundness of the NFL revolutionary line as well as that of its methods and principles used in the struggle. They are the forerunners of new victories which bid fair to outstrip the current exploits.

The communiqué points out in the end that the propects for 1969 are bright for the liberation struggle in South Viet Nam and gloomy for the aggressors and traitors to the country. Nevertheless, it cautions us

(Continued page 7)

PLFA ATTACKS

FEB. 23 - MARCH 5, 1969